

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicant: Carl Q. Howard  
Serial Number: 10/585,386  
Filed: 07/06/2006  
Group Art Unit: 3651  
Examiner: Hess, Douglas A.  
Title: DEVICE TO REDUCE NOISE TRANSMISSION  
THROUGH THE GAP BETWEEN ESCALATOR STEPS

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION**

Mail Stop AF  
Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

This paper is responsive to the Final Office Action mailed on April 28, 2008. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application.

**The rejection of claims 1-3, 5-11 and 16-25  
under 35 U.S.C. §112 must be withdrawn.**

The Examiner's rejection misapplies the law. 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, requires that a claim be clear and particular to point out the claimed subject matter. It is clear from the claims that Applicant is claiming a combination of steps and sound transmission reducing features. There is no requirement for Applicant to recite additional structure when the recited elements have a clear structural and functional relationship. Applicant's use of passenger conveyor system in the preamble of the claims does not in any way require Applicant to recite any portion of such a system that Applicant does not wish to claim. One skilled in the art would clearly understand what the claims mean and, therefore, they do particularly and distinctly recite

the claimed subject matter sufficient to satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The rejection must be withdrawn.

**The rejection of claims 1-3, 5-11 and 16-25  
under 35 U.S.C. §103 must be withdrawn.**

The *Soldat* reference does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness against any of Applicant's claims. The brush 3 of the *Soldat* reference may possibly be interpreted as a sound transmission reducing member but there still is nothing whatsoever to suggest in any way how a separate sound insulating material that is distinct from the sound transmission reducing member (as recited in claim 1) would be supported on an underside of the steps in the *Soldat* reference. Without that, there is no possible *prima facie* case of obviousness.

There is nothing in the *Soldat* reference that in any way provides any basis for adding a sound insulating material to the arrangement of that reference. For example, how would a separate sound insulating material possibly enhance the cleaning capability of *Soldat's* brush? Such a modification of the reference can only be explained by using Applicant's disclosure and claims and hindsight reasoning. That is not permitted when attempting to manufacture a *prima facie* case of obviousness. There must be some reason for making the modification suggested by the art or the knowledge of a skilled artisan. There is nothing whatsoever in the record that in any way suggests how the *Soldat* reference could be or should be modified in such a manner. Therefore, there is no *prima facie* case of obviousness against claim 1.

Regarding claims 16 and 21, the sound transmission reducing member is a part of one of the steps and made of the same material as the one of the steps. It is impossible to modify the *Soldat* reference to make it consistent with these claims. The brush 3 of the *Soldat* reference cannot be the same material as the material of the steps. If it were modified in that way, it would no longer operate as the brush 3 of the *Soldat* reference is intended to operate. If the brush 3

were changed to be the same material as that of the steps, it would no longer be a brush for cleaning purposes.

Such a modification of the *Soldat* reference is not permitted as explained in MPEP 2143.01(V) and (VI). A proposed modification to a reference that interferes with its ability to perform its intended function or renders it incapable of performing its intended function cannot be made. Here the Examiner is suggesting to change the brush 3 by making it out of the same material as the steps (e.g., metal). If one were to do that, the brush 3 would cease to be the kind of brush disclosed in *Soldat* and it would cease to operate as it is intended to operate. Therefore, it is impossible to modify the *Soldat* reference in any way to attempt to manufacture a *prima facie* case of obviousness against claims 16 or 21.

None of Applicant's claims can be considered obvious. The rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 must be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS

By: /David J. Gaskey/

David J. Gaskey  
Registration No. 37,139  
400 W. Maple Rd., Ste. 350  
Birmingham, MI 48009  
(248) 988-8360

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